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Next 3 Page(s) In Document Denied

Page 4 of 9 Pages

50X1-HUM

Increasing the Efficiency of Troop Control
When Conducting an Army Counterstrike

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High efficiency in troop control has acquired a great deal of importance in modern operations. The saving of literally each minute spent collecting and collating data on the enemy, adopting a plan, and allocating tasks to the troops, may radically affect the attainment of success in highly mobile actions in a sharply changing situation. These conditions are particularly characteristic of the preparations to conduct a counterstrike, which is an example of the highest level of defense activity.

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The experience of exercises and research has shown that we have considerable reserves at our disposal for increasing the efficiency of control, first of all, by changing the methods of adopting a counterstrike plan, by the speed in conveying tasks to subordinate troops and, finally, by creating a single, continuously operating combat control center.

Under modern conditions, the most acceptable operating method by which a plan is adopted and developed and tasks conveyed to troops is a single, logically and technically integrated process. The commander, the staffs, and the chiefs of the arms of troops and services of the army participate in it simultaneously, and commanding officers and staffs of subordinate echelons are included in the parallel preparation of the counterstrike. Thus, the time expended is essentially reduced and the efficiency of control increased.

During an army defensive operation the plan to defeat an invading enemy grouping is adopted on a map without reconnaissance, and in a limited time frame (according to the experience of command-staff exercises and troop exercises, in no more than an hour), on the basis of continuous and complete knowledge of the situation, in order to immediately influence the development of combat actions.

50X1-HUM

In the interest of increasing the efficiency of control, and because of a lack of time, in our view there is no need to formulate a separate counterstrike plan. The basic starting conditions are taken into account in the plan developed in detail for the defensive operation itself, but it

Page 5 of 9 Pages

50X1-HUM

obviously is not possible to provide for all the specific changes in the situation and reflect them in the counterstrike plan.

The speed in conveying tasks to subordinate troops becomes especially important in achieving high efficiency of troop control for the delivery of a counterstrike. We feel that a positive effect is derived from allocating tasks to the troops immediately after they are determined by the army commander in the process of adopting the plan. By this method the troops are included in the preparation for combat actions in parallel, without waiting for the plan to be made official and the written documents to be received. Written confirmation of verbally allocated tasks and detailed planning, if required, may be completed a little later.

Not disputing the decisive role of precise and uninterrupted communications in the timely transmission of combat instructions to the troops, we must find other ways to accelerate as much as possible the process of allocating combat tasks to the executors. In the first place, a proper procedure should be established for the passage of combat documents through the information organs and communications centers. We think it is necessary not only to establish a single, strict system of document traffic but frequently to execute documents on paper of various colors. For instance, print combat orders and instructions of the "Vozdukh" series on pink paper, documents of the "Vneocherednyye" series on blue, "Srochnyye" on yellow and all the rest on white. In our view, this will facilitate the passage of combat orders, instructions, and reports, and it will save time.

Practice justifies executing combat instructions in three carbon copies. One of these is sent to the cipher office, another is delivered to the communications officer, and the axis officer, on the basis of the third copy, communicates the content of the document to his subordinate staff by secret coding device or radio communications. This kind of parallel transmission ensures the reliable conveyance of combat tasks to the troops.

A large reserve for saving time and increasing the efficiency of control lies in the very method of processing operational and combat documents. The first step in this direction is for officers to develop skills in preparing short and clear documents; the second is to use standard document forms, which constantly have to be improved and persistently used by commanding officers and staffs.

The basic method of troop control during a counterstrike will be signal-commands, short combat instructions, and direct communication of the

50X1-HUM

Page 6 of 9 Pages

50X1-HUM

army commander, the chief of staff, and other persons responsible for field control with division and even regiment commanders by technical communications means. For this purpose (according to the experience of exercises) we used a coded control chart, the signal-commands of which may be transmitted even via open communications channels. Subordinates use previously established signal-messages to report the fulfilment of combat tasks.

The special feature of organizing control in a defensive operation to defeat an invading large enemy grouping, if the opposing sides use only conventional means of destruction, lies in the fact that the formation commander and staff have to simultaneously direct the defensive combat actions of the troops and take measures to create strike groupings on the counterstrike axis for the purpose of going over to a decisive offensive; and the formation commander and staff must also take into consideration the special features of organizing control in the event nuclear weapons are employed.

In response to the difficulty involved in increasing the efficiency of this kind of control, our army created a single combat control center (as is done in many military districts) for all exercises. This center includes the army commander, a member of the military council, the army chief of staff, the chief of the operations department with a planning group and axis officers, the chief of rocket troops and artillery with one or two officers, and the chief of army air defense troops. During the period the plan is being adopted other chiefs of the arms of troops and services also are called to the center on orders of the commander.

50X1-HUM

We think creating a unified, continuously operating combat control center in an army satisfies modern requirements, increases efficiency, and can fully ensure the control of troops during an operation and while conducting a counterstrike, using the available technical means of communication and having a proper structure of the control organs.

One of the basic measures for ensuring stable and efficient troop control is, as is known, a well thought-out organization of control posts and communications. When conducting an army counterstrike, troop control will be effected from the control posts which were organized during the preparation of the defensive operation. But for a more purposeful direction of troops delivering the counterstrike it is desirable to reorganize an alternate command post into a forward command post and move it out onto the axis of main strike, or to create a mobile control group

50X1-HUM

Page 7 of 9 Pa50X1-HUM

from personnel of the main command post, headed by the army commander and provided with the necessary means of communication and conveyance (a total of 10-12 vehicles).

Practical exercises show that it is desirable to position all control post personnel by groups (elements) of a certain function in the interests of increasing viability. At the army command post these groups might be: the combat control center headed by the commander; staff groups; and groups of chiefs of the arms of troops and representatives of coordinating arms troops and branches of the armed forces, as well as support and servicing groups. At relocation time, there should be available highly mobile vehicles equipped with communications means and work spaces already prepared. This is particularly necessary during a counterstrike.

We would like to recommend the following approximate composition of regiment, division, and army mobile control posts (see diagram). While positioning and relocating control posts the vehicles serving their personnel must be separated from the control vehicles and located 1.5 to 2 kilometers away.

Reliable, continuous, and efficient troop control during a counterstrike (according to the experience of exercises) may be ensured by the combined use of radio, radio-relay, tropospheric, line, and mobile means of communication on the basis of a previously created, single communications system. The methods of organizing communications by axes, and the wide use of radio-relay points and auxiliary communications centers, have proved their value.

The experience of command-staff exercises indicates that the collection of situation data is greatly hindered by a lack of efficiency in the passage of the flow of information being sent to the army staff. The same information is transmitted on the lines of the combined-arms staffs and of the chiefs of the arms of troops and services. This results in loading the communications channels and creates unnecessary parallel flows of information. Often important data are lost or get to the army commander and staff 3-4 hours late and more. All this is impermissible when delivering a counterstrike in the fast-moving conditions of the situation.

The increasing volume of situation data and the growing "frequency of information" require that new methods be sought for obtaining and processing them. For these purposes, in our view, it is desirable: for divisions to have a permanent briefing group (2 to 3 men), and an army staff to have a group of axis officers for each division (2 men each) and an information

Page 8 of 9 Pages

50X1-HUM

group (no less than 3 men); to accelerate the passage of combat instructions and reports by reducing their volume and strictly regulating transmissions at the communications centers; to train field control officers and division staffs to appraise situation data and independently make valid conclusions on the situation in a report for the commander or commanding officer.

Comprehensive, high-level training of operations officers, the other field control officers, and staffs as a whole, likewise is one of the conditions which ensures stability and a continuous increase in the efficiency of controlling army troops while delivering a counterstrike.

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SECRET

Approximate Composition of Mobile Control Posts

(Command armored recon.
patrol vehicle)

(BRIM-RU)
Commander
of recon
platoon

(BTR-50PU)
Regiment Commander;
Chief of recon;
Chief of com

(GAZ-69)
Commo
Officer

(ZIL-157)
Security
Section

(ZIL-131)
Power
Unit

Motorized Rifle and Tank Regiments

Motorized Rifle and Tank Divisions

1 (BRIM-RU) Reconnaissance
Department

2 (BTR-50PU) Commanders
A & B;
Chiefs of
forward det,
ops dept,
recon, com;
Dep Chief
ops Dept

3 (BTR-60P) Chief of
rocket
troops &
group of
officers

4 (BTR-50P) Chief, Air
Defense
w/group of
officers

5 (ZIL-131) Cipher
office
(code
center)

6 (GAZ-69) Radio
R-116

7 (GAZ-69) Radio
R-125-MT

8 (Division
Commander)

9 (ZIL-157) Radar

10 (ZIL-157) Crane

11 (ZIL-157) Corrugated
Steel
shelter,
2 sets

12 (E-308)
Excavator

Forward Command Post

1 (BTR-60P) Security
Platoon
Recon
Section

2 (BTR-60P) Army Commander;
Chief, ops sec-
tion; Chief,
Commo; ops
officers

3 (BTR-60P) Chief, Recon
troops w/
group of
officers

4 (BTR-60P) Chief
Rocket Troops
& Army w/
group officers

5 (BTR-60P) Chief,
Air Defense
w/group
officers

6 (BTR-60P) Chief,
Engineer &
Chemical
troops w/
officers

7 (BTR-60P) Cipher
Office &
code ctr

8-9 (ZIL-131) R-102

10 (ZIL-131?) R-?

11 (ZIL-131) R-122

12-13 (ZIL-131) P-227TM

14 (ZIL-131) E-349

15 (ZIL-131) R-299

16-18 (GAZ-69) R-125-1
Mobile
Commo
Means-2

19-21 (BTR-60P) Security
Company

22-24 (K-61) Sapper pl
w/3 sets
corrugated
steel
shelter

25-26 (ZIL-131) Food
Supply Point
w/medical
post

27 group of
officers

28 (E-308) Excavator

29 (PKT) Heavy wheeled
track layer
(as they become
available)

3 MI-4

1-Commo

1-Army Commander

1-Auxiliary Commo Means